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ABSTRACT

This teacher's guide is designed to accompany the five-part videotape, "We the People: The President and the Constitution." The videotape draws on interviews with four of the five most recent presidents: Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter, and Ronald Reagan. The videotape examines issues including: (1) the criteria each president employed when choosing advisers; (2) the rivalry between the executive and legislative branches of government; (3) the role of the president in the formulation and execution of foreign policy; and (4) the role of president in domestic affairs. The teacher's guide will help students learn about presidential power and understand the intricate workings of the office of the president. The activities in each of the five lessons provide a variety of educational experiences for students, many of which develop higher-order thinking skills. All of the activities involve class discussions or small-group work. The active learning approach encourages students to go beyond recognition or knowledge of facts to begin analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating the issues and concepts under study. (LH)

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WE THE PEOPLE

THE PRESIDENT AND THE CONSTITUTION

INSTRUCTOR'S GUIDE

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WE THE PEOPLE

THE PRESIDENT AND THE CONSTITUTION

INSTRUCTOR'S GUIDE

Developed by Charles R. Sass

Close Up Publishing

Close Up Foundation

The Close Up Foundation is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that encourages responsible participation in the democratic process through educational programs and publications in government and citizenship. Since its founding in 1970, Close Up has been committed to developing new and better ways for young people, teachers, and a widening circle of citizens of all ages to gain a practical understanding of how public policy affects their lives and how individual and collective efforts affect public policy. For more information about Close Up programs, call toll-free 1-800-336-5479.

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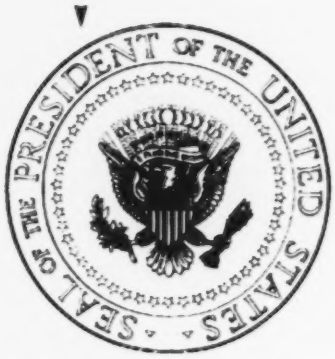
INTRODUCTION

TO THE INSTRUCTOR



Article II of the United States Constitution creates the office of president, lays the ground rules for his or her qualifications and selection, provides for a successor, says the president should be paid, presents the oath of office, and lists some specific powers and duties. But, despite the best efforts of the Constitution's authors to define the office of the chief executive, the scope of presidential power has been debated ever since George Washington took that first oath.

Forty-one men have occupied this most important office in the land, and each has had his own ideas about what he can and cannot do and what he should and should not do. The office has been held by hands-off presidents such as James Buchanan and Calvin Coolidge and by activists like the Roosevelts, Theodore and Franklin. Most historians agree, however, that the nature of the job is for the most part determined by the character of the person who occupies the office. Woodrow Wilson said that "the president is at liberty . . . to be as big a man as he can."

Four of the five most recent former presidents are featured in the videotape "We the People: The President and the Constitution." Each of them confronted unique challenges and brought unique insights to the job, yet there are similarities among them as well. You and your students should find it interesting, educational, and sometimes provocative to hear what these four men have to say about a variety of topics.

The video will fit into your curriculum in a number of ways. Government and civics teachers will find the tape helpful when studying the constitutional powers and duties of the president, the relationship between the executive and legislative branches, and the role the president plays in formulating and carrying out foreign and domestic policy. History teachers can use the video to enhance lessons about the presidencies of these four men and the historic events of which they were part.

ABOUT THE VIDEO

"We the People: The President and the Constitution" is a five-part videotape drawing on interviews with former presidents Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter, and Ronald Reagan. The interviewer is distinguished journalist Hugh Sidey. The interviews were conducted under the auspices of the Commission on the Bicentennial of the United States Constitution. The commission's chairman, former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court Warren Burger, introduces the video.

The video is divided into five parts:

Part 1: The Presidency introduces the former presidents with synopses and quotations characterizing their presidencies. In addition, each talks about what he looked for when choosing advisers. (16 minutes)

Part 2: Working with Congress focuses on the natural rivalry between the executive and legislative branches. The former presidents give their opinions about the War Powers Resolution, the classic example of conflict between the White House and Congress. (26 minutes)

Part 3: Tools of Foreign Policy points out the important role the president has in forming and carrying out the nation's foreign policies. The former chief executives discuss specific actions they took in handling foreign affairs and working with foreign leaders. (35 minutes)

Part 4: Domestic Affairs and Presidential Power emphasizes the president's role in dealing with domestic matters. The former presidents comment on topics such as a balanced budget amendment, term limits, campaign reform, and the role of the media. (37 minutes)

Part 5: Reflections on the Presidency shows the viewer what being the president of the United States meant to these four men. (5 minutes)

ABOUT THE GUIDE

This guide is designed to help your students learn about presidential power and understand the intricate workings of the office of president of the United States.

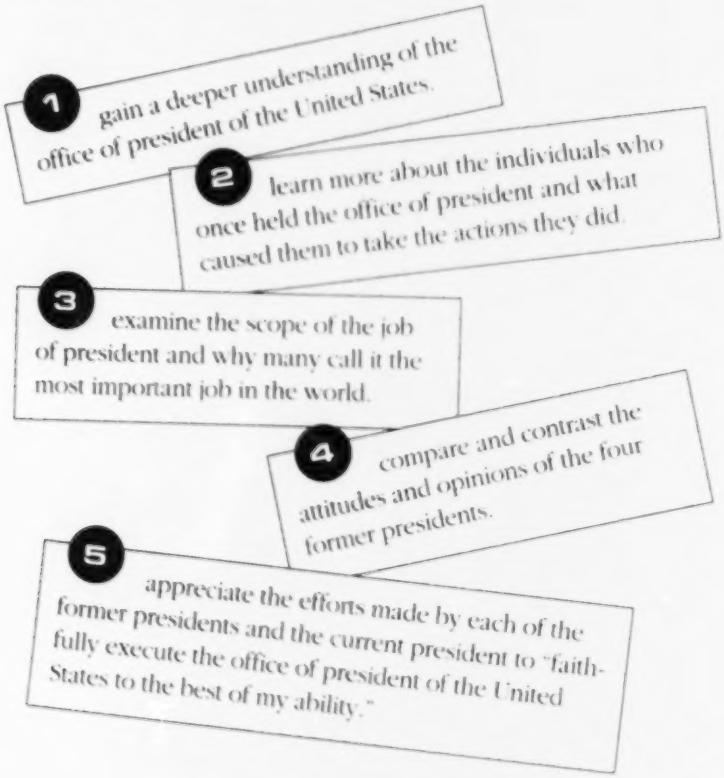
The guide is composed of five lessons, each of which can be used at different points in your lesson plan. You can use Lesson 1 to introduce the video and acquaint students with the former presidents. Lesson 2 will help your students understand the challenges the president faces in working with Congress, which often has its own ideas about how the country should be run. You can use Lesson 3 to help your students learn that the president plays the major role in establishing the nation's foreign policy. They will also find out about the many tools the president has at his or her disposal to carry out foreign policy.

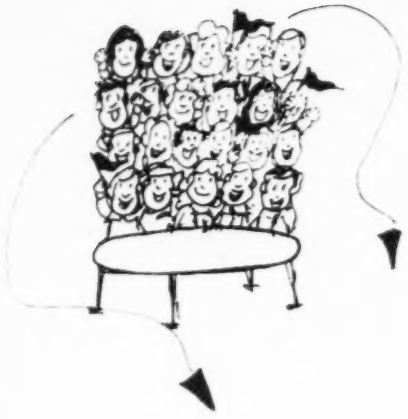
Lesson 4 will allow your students to compare and contrast their own views and those of the people in their communities with the opinions of the former presidents on such topics as balancing the budget, limiting congressional terms, and reforming campaigns. You can use Lesson 5 to find out what your students think about the presidency and four of the people who once held the job.

The guide also provides suggestions for making this video a successful and enjoyable learning experience. The teaching strategies and activities contained in the guide can be used in a variety of ways. Feel free to develop or adapt the activities to suit your teaching style, the needs of your students, and the amount of time you have to cover each topic.

GOALS

This videotape and instructor's guide should help students to:


1 gain a deeper understanding of the office of president of the United States.
2 learn more about the individuals who once held the office of president and what caused them to take the actions they did.
3 examine the scope of the job of president and why many call it the most important job in the world.
4 compare and contrast the attitudes and opinions of the four former presidents.
5 appreciate the efforts made by each of the former presidents and the current president to "faithfully execute the office of president of the United States to the best of my ability."



STUDENT ACTIVITIES

The activities in each lesson are designed to provide a variety of educational experiences for your students including developing higher-order thinking skills.

Rather than following a traditional lecture format, all of the activities involve class discussions or small-group work. This active learning approach encourages students to go beyond mere recognition or knowledge of the facts to begin analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating the issues and concepts under study.

TIPS ON LEADING EFFECTIVE CLASS DISCUSSIONS

All of the activities in this guide involve some class discussion. Following these procedures will make your discussion more effective.

- Structure class discussions to involve the entire class; avoid creating a dialogue between the teacher and a few students. Make a special point of encouraging students to speak directly to one another rather than to you.

- Sequence your questions so that more students can participate. Use Bloom's Taxonomy to help you develop your questions. Sequencing is important because it develops a concept or idea from rudimentary to more sophisticated.

- Incorporate "wait time" into your discussion periods. You should wait for all students to respond to a question; if students cannot respond successfully, rephrase the question and try again.

TIPS ON CONDUCTING SMALL-GROUP WORK

Small-group work is an important part of the activities in this guide.

Stress the need for students to:

- listen,
- solicit opinions from all group members,
- focus on issues rather than on personalities,
- focus on the assigned topic and task,
- resolve conflicts,
- move the discussion along, and
- probe the responses of other students.

Indicate to students that they should work to guarantee that everyone in their group participates.

After the activity, conduct an examination of group participation so that students understand that their ability to work together is as important as the conclusions they reach.

LESSON 1

THE PRESIDENCY

OBJECTIVES

After completing this lesson, students will be able to:

1. list powers and responsibilities of the president of the United States.
2. discuss what the Constitution says about the office of president.
3. compare viewpoints of former presidents regarding leadership, polls, campaign contributions, goals, and other topics.

PROCEDURES

1 Before showing any part of the videotape "We the People: The President and the Constitution," spend a few minutes discussing with your class the office and powers of the president.

Begin by having students brainstorm a list of powers the president has and actions the president can or is required to perform. Record their responses on the board.

Then, ask students to brainstorm a list of powers the president does not have and actions the president cannot take. Keep both lists on the board.

Next, distribute **Student Handout 1—Constitutional Powers of the President.** Give students a few minutes to read the handout, or you may want to have selected students read it aloud. Explain that the items mentioned on the handout are the only specific presidential powers included in the Constitution.

Then, look again at the two brainstorming lists on the board. Circle the items that do not belong or are in the wrong list. Are students surprised by anything the president can or cannot do? Do they think the president has too much or too little power? Would any of them like to be president one day? Why or why not? (Note: Remind students to keep **Student Handout 1** because they will need it again for Lesson 2.)

2 Introduce the video by briefly explaining what the students are about to see. Mention that it includes excerpts from interviews with former presidents Nixon, Ford, Carter, and Reagan, in which they tell their views and opinions on a variety of subjects. Ask students to name the fifth living former president.

Write the five presidents' names side by side on the board. Then, ask your students to tell facts that they know or think they remember about each man. List their responses under the appropriate name. Include inaccurate as well as factual information. After lists have been formed, discuss the responses under each name. Point out any errors and add other information that you may think important.

Next, distribute copies of **Student Handout 2—Introducing the Presidents** and give students five to ten minutes to read the short biographies of each man and the questions that follow each biography. Tell students that although they do not need to answer the handout questions now, they should listen for the answers while the tape is being shown.

Show Part 1 of the video (16 minutes). After students have seen Part 1, discuss the questions on **Student Handout 2.** Proceed to the Additional Suggestions or Lesson 2 whenever you are ready.

Chief Justice Warren Burger (left) administers the oath of office to President Ronald Reagan for his second term.

The White House

■ Copy the presidential oath of office on the board.

> *I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my ability preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States.*

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS

In a brainstorming session, have students call out both positive and negative aspects of being president. The list might include such items as being the leader of the world's most powerful democratic nation, running for reelection, meeting with foreign leaders, proposing legislation to Congress, being in the public spotlight, having little privacy, being the victim of assassination attempts, and so forth. Generate as many ideas as possible in ten minutes and write them on the board.

Then, go back and highlight every item that deals with presidential power. Ask students to decide whether each of these items is positive, negative, or both. Help them to realize that presidential power comes in many forms and that power can be a double-edged sword in that exercising it often exacts a price. For example, presidents have the opportunity to give televised addresses, thus speaking directly to the American people about issues of their choice. However, they are often criticized by the media, which serve a watchdog function on the presidency and abridge some of that power.

Finally, ask students if they feel that the presidential oath of office is an adequate promise for the most important leader in the nation and the world to make.

■ Part 1 of the videotape includes some interesting, and perhaps controversial, statements by the former presidents.

Lead a discussion with your class in which you consider each of the quotes listed on the next page. If students have not yet seen the video, read the quote and ask them to speculate on who said it. If they have seen the video before you do this exercise, ask them if they can remember who made each statement.

After students determine the speaker, ask them for their opinions as to the accuracy of the quote, whether they agree or disagree, and why.

I had more adversaries in the Congress than I wanted, but I never had any enemies. And a president has to achieve that as well.
—Gerald Ford

In an organization you need people who have brains, heart, and guts—and perhaps the most important is the last.
—Richard Nixon

. . . a president is elected to lead and not to follow. I do not believe in consensus government. Consensus government means the lowest common denominator.
—Richard Nixon

And I think the American people kind of hunger for it [pomp and ceremony]. In a way the American people want a royal family in the White House.
—Jimmy Carter

Your whole strength in acting is the reaction of the people . . . that are going to spend their money to come in and see that picture.
—Ronald Reagan

I came into office with a belief that the people of this country were hungering for a spiritual revival.
—Ronald Reagan

So we didn't solve all the problems, but we got people to talking to one another and stop screeching and screaming and yelling at one another.
—Gerald Ford

And when I got to Washington, however, there was a disadvantage. I would say primarily with the news media because I was looked on as kind of a strange character. You know I was a Baptist and I was a southerner and I was a governor.
—Jimmy Carter

LESSON 2

WORKING WITH CONGRESS

OBJECTIVES

After completing this lesson, students will be able to:

1. discuss areas of conflict that Presidents Nixon, Ford, Carter, and Reagan had with Congress.
2. contrast the constitutional powers of the president with those of Congress.
3. explain the War Powers Resolution and why it is a good example of how the executive and legislative branches may conflict.

PROCEDURES

1 Introduce Part 2 of the video by reminding students that the Constitution gives specific powers to all three branches of government. If your students have done Lesson 1, they have already learned about the powers granted to the president by the Constitution. They should retain **Student Handout 1—Constitutional Powers of the President** for this activity and read Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution to learn the powers of Congress. (Students' history or government books likely will have the Constitution printed in the back.) After they have read Article I, Section 8, lead a brief discussion of congressional powers. Focus on such powers as laying and collecting taxes, paying debts, borrowing money, regulating commerce, coining money, declaring war, raising and supporting the army and navy, and making all laws "which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the foregoing powers."

Remind your class that because of the constitutional powers each branch has been granted, they frequently clash. Ask students to speculate on what they think the former presidents will say about Congress. (The presidents are generally critical of what they see as Congress's inability to perform responsibly, blaming much of the problem on the committee and subcommittee system and large congressional staffs.) Point out in this discussion that there are 535 members of Congress, all representing their own districts and states, who must depend on committees and staff to do much of the preliminary work before a bill is actually brought to debate and a vote in each house. **Show Part 2 of the video (26 minutes).**

2 Next, distribute **Student Handout 3—Dividing the Powers.** Have students work in pairs to complete the handout. Give them as much time as you think necessary. Discuss the handout in class and ask students to speculate

where tensions may arise as Congress and the president execute their respective powers. Mention specific areas of conflict between the executive and legislative branches that are brought out on the video—the committee system, the large congressional staffs, the requirement of a two-thirds vote of the Senate to ratify treaties, and the presidential call for a line-item veto. Discuss the problems the presidents see with having a divided government, in which the executive and legislative branches are controlled by different parties.

3 Conclude by leading a discussion about the War Powers Resolution. Point out that all four presidents comment, sometimes harshly, about the resolution and their differences with Congress over its passage and implementation. The following should help you familiarize yourself with the resolution:

Up until the time of the Vietnam War, Congress deferred to the president on national security issues. In 1973, in response to complaints that President Nixon was expanding his powers as commander in chief to unconstitutional limits by conducting war in Southeast Asia, Congress tried to reassert itself by passing the War Powers Resolution. In 1964, Congress had given President Lyndon Johnson the authority to "take all necessary measures to repel any armed attack against the forces of the United States" in the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution. As the years went by, Congress began to have second thoughts about giving the president such wide latitude in foreign affairs. Thus, Congress passed the War Powers Resolution, which said:

U.S. troops in Grenada in October 1983.

U.S. Navy Peter D. Sandberg

1. Within forty-eight hours after committing armed forces to combat abroad, the president must report to Congress in writing, explaining the action.

2. Use of U.S. forces in combat must end in sixty days unless Congress authorizes a longer period.

3. Within the sixty-day period, Congress may order an immediate withdrawal of American forces by adopting a concurrent resolution, which is not subject to a presidential veto.

President Nixon vetoed the bill as unconstitutional, but Congress overrode his veto, and it became law. Ever since it was passed, the War Powers Resolution has been controversial. Central to the controversy is still the question of how far the president's war powers extend. Presidents say it ties their hands and does not allow them, as commander in chief, to respond quickly enough in taking action on life-or-death matters such as using nuclear weapons. Congress counters by arguing that presidents have sometimes abused the war-making power and that only Congress has the constitutional power to declare war.

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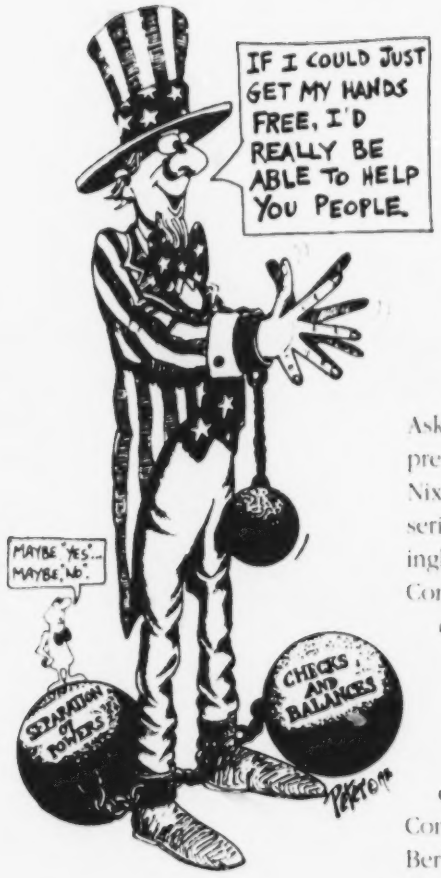
IF I COULD JUST GET MY HANDS FREE, I'D REALLY BE ABLE TO HELP YOU PEOPLE.
MAYBE "YES"... MAYBE "NO".
SEPARATION OF POWERS
CHECKS AND BALANCES

Ask students for their opinions regarding the warmaking powers of the president and Congress. Which branch should take the lead? President Nixon, in his veto message, said, "[The War Powers Resolution] would seriously undermine this nation's ability to act decisively and convincingly in times of international crisis." Do students think he was right? Conversely, one senator said after the resolution was passed, "Wars cannot be successfully fought except with the consent of the people and with their support." Do students agree with that statement? Nixon refers to his airlifting of U.S. arms and materials to Israel during the 1973 Yom Kippur War as an example of an action he could not have taken if the War Powers Resolution had been in effect. Was his example legitimate? Were U.S. troops involved? Compare his example to similar U.S. relief efforts such as the 1948 Berlin airlift or the delivery of food to Ethiopia. Would the War Powers Resolution have applied in these cases? You might want to conclude with a discussion of recent U.S. efforts in Somalia. Did the War Powers Resolution play any part in that effort, especially since U.S. troops were involved?

■ Have students use **Student Handout 4—Presidential Scorecard** to evaluate the five living former presidents and President Bill Clinton. Develop a class average for each president and display the rankings on the board. Then, have students discuss this exercise. Was it easier to rate some presidents than others? Why? How do past presidents compare with the ranking of the current president? Students may want to interview parents, neighbors, and relatives about presidents they remember. How do their rankings and opinions compare with students' rankings? How would students explain differences?

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS

■ Ask students to study recent legislative proposals by President Clinton. In a class discussion, focus on the results of the president's initiatives. Did Congress rewrite the president's proposals? Did Congress pass related legislation? Was the president satisfied with the congressional action? How many bills has President Clinton vetoed this congressional session? Were the disagreements related to party differences, differences between the executive and legislative roles, or something else? Have them evaluate whether the checks and balances system is a help or hindrance to creating public policy.

■ A portion of Part 2 of the video is devoted to a discussion of divided government. Divided government occurs when the office of the president and at least one branch of Congress are controlled by different political parties. Both presidents and members of Congress have at times expressed frustration over having their legislation blocked by either a presidential veto or a Congress that refuses to pass programs the president calls for. Have students research the times in U.S. history when divided government has occurred. Then ask them to study the consequences of those divisions. Which presidents suffered because of it and which presidents seemed to get along well with a Congress of a different party? Examples you might want to use include Ronald Reagan, a Republican, who got much of his economic legislation passed despite having to work with a Democratic House, and Democrat Jimmy Carter who had problems getting legislation passed even though both the executive and legislative branches were then controlled by the Democrats.

LESSON 3

TOOLS OF FOREIGN POLICY

OBJECTIVES

After completing this lesson, students will be able to:

1. list the tools of foreign policy available to the president and the government of the United States.
2. discuss the foreign policy decisions made by former presidents in reaction to certain historic events.
3. compare and contrast the responses of the four former presidents to the foreign crises with which they had to deal.

PROCEDURES

1 Introduce Part 3 of the video by telling your class that in this portion of the tape they will hear the former presidents discussing certain situations and incidents during which they were called upon to make foreign policy decisions that they thought were best for the national interest.

Explain that the actions the presidents took were chosen from a list of "tools" that they had at their disposal. These tools are diplomacy, military force, international and regional organizations, alliances, foreign aid, trade relations, boycotts and sanctions, and propaganda. Such tools are used by presidents in promoting security interests, economic interests, and ideological interests of the nation.

Then, distribute copies of **Student Handout 5—Tools of Foreign Policy.** Allow students a few minutes to read the handout, and tell them to keep these tools in mind as they watch Part 3 of the video. If, while watching, they see a clear example of one of these tools, they should jot it down.

Show Part 3 of the video (35 minutes).

2 After students have seen Part 3 of the videotape, divide them into pairs and have them answer the questions on **Student Handout 5.** Allow as much time as you think necessary for them to finish this assignment. Urge them to consider each tool of foreign policy carefully as they answer the questions. You may want to show Part 3 of the video again, after they have been working on the handout for some time.

After all pairs have finished, lead a discussion based on their answers. (The answer key for **Student Handout 5** is on pages 19 and 20.)

Conclude by discussing the tools of foreign policy used by President George Bush during his term in office. Consider his actions in the Persian Gulf region, in dealing with the former Soviet Union, in South Africa, and elsewhere.

At the signing of the Camp David Accords, Anwar Sadat, Jimmy Carter, and Menachem Begin (left to right).

The White House

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■ Divide a large bulletin board into sections or use poster boards to separate the eight tools of foreign policy as explained in **Student Handout 5.** Then ask students to find examples of each of the eight tools and bring in newspaper and magazine articles to place in the appropriate section on the board. If they cannot find a current example, encourage them to find a historical example.

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS

■ Divide your class into eight groups and have each group research and report on one of the following events:

—the U.S. bombing of Cambodia during the Vietnam War

—the Mayaguez incident

—the Iran/*contra* scandal

—the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan

—the hostage crisis at the U.S. embassy in Iran

—the Vladivostok summit between Ford and Brezhnev

—the Camp David talks

—the Reykjavik summit between Reagan and Gorbachev

Reports should tell the complete story of the event, focusing on the reaction of the president involved and the tools of foreign policy that both sides used.

A spokesperson for each group should read the report in front of the whole class.

■ Organize classroom debates around questions of current U.S. foreign policy. Possible topics are:

Resolved: The United States should do whatever is necessary to keep friendly, pro-American governments in power in the countries of Latin America.

Resolved: The United States should do whatever is necessary to keep friendly governments in power in the former Soviet republics and eastern Europe.

Resolved: The United States should keep diplomatic and economic pressure on the government of South Africa until apartheid is dismantled and majority rule is established.

Resolved: The United States should retaliate against unfair trade practices carried out by Japan and the countries of western Europe.

Perhaps there are other foreign policy topics you want to offer. You will have to decide how many debates to hold, depending on available time.

If time does not allow all students to participate in a debate, you might want to assign them to be judges, timekeepers, or moderators.

ANSWER KEY FOR STUDENT HANDOUT 5

1 Nixon used **military force** in Southeast Asia, including the bombing of Cambodia. He also used **diplomacy** in negotiating the eventual peace treaty. He said that the bombing of Cambodia did help speed negotiations between the two sides and bring an end to U.S. involvement in Vietnam. He was criticized for bombing Cambodia because some said it was an escalation of a war that, up to that time, had been confined to Vietnam.

2 Ford used **military force** in forcing the Cambodians to release the merchant seamen on the Mayaguez. He says he was satisfied with what he did—that it had to be done to show that the United States would not be pushed around. He was criticized for not trying other means of diplomacy first and because forty-one American military personnel were killed during the rescue.

3 Reagan gave **economic and military aid** to the *contra* rebels fighting in Nicaragua and to other governments in Central America that he thought were friendly to the United States. Reagan also used **sanctions** against the Sandinista government in Nicaragua. **Propaganda** also played a part in convincing the American people that aiding the *contras* was the right thing to do. Reagan believed that his efforts in Central America did keep communism from spreading and helped bring about free elections in Nicaragua and El Salvador.

4 Carter used **economic sanctions** against the Soviet Union by stopping grain sales from the United States. He also ordered a U.S. **boycott** of the 1980 Moscow Olympics. Carter provided **military aid** in the form of small arms and ammunition to the Afghan rebels. The Carter Doctrine implied that the United States would not stand idle while Soviet forces attempted to install a communist government in a neutral nation.

5 Carter employed **secret diplomacy** in sending Khomeini a secret message telling him that if any U.S. hostages were put on trial in Iran, the United States would interrupt all commerce between Iran and the outside world. He also warned that if any harm came to a hostage, the United States would respond **militarily,** at a time and place of its own choosing. Khomeini never again mentioned putting the hostages on trial.

6 Nixon believed it was a mistake to reduce the efforts of the CIA to carry out covert activities. Carter, on the other hand, reduced the functions of the CIA because he thought they violated the basic principles of the United States. He believed the intelligence-gathering agencies needed to be bound by the moral standards that guide all Americans. Ford decried Congress's involvement in the day-to-day activities of intelligence organizations and argues that the nation has to maintain the capability to carry out covert operations at all times. Reagan, while not speaking directly about the CIA, justified his covert operation to deliver arms to Iran with hopes of getting the hostages out.

7 Reagan believed that if making one shipment of arms to the Hizbullah to convince them to help get U.S. hostages out of Iran was successful, then it was worth the try. He said he wished he had gotten the whole story from North and Poindexter and asked for their resignations.

8 Carter used **diplomacy** when he brought the Egyptians and Israelis together at Camp David. He knew the risks were high because he was not sure how the talks were going to turn out. If they failed, he would look bad, and the country would be embarrassed.

9 Reagan broke off the Reykjavik summit with Gorbachev because the Soviet leader wanted to negotiate away the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), a weapons system that Reagan said was not a bargaining chip. Reagan felt that his tough stance on SDI and arms agreements made Gorbachev realize that the Soviet Union could not win an arms race. Thus, Gorbachev took steps to reduce distrust between the two countries.

10 Reagan called the Soviet Union an "evil empire" because he wanted its leaders to know that he was not being fooled by them. He knew about their arms buildup and wanted them to know that he would respond. He thought the only answer to the Cold War was peace through strength.

LESSON 4

DOMESTIC AFFAIRS AND PRESIDENTIAL POWER

OBJECTIVES

After completing this lesson, students will be able to:

1. discuss issues such as the balanced budget amendment, term limits, campaign reform, and the role of the media.
2. describe class and community attitudes about these issues.
3. compare and contrast attitudes of four former presidents about these issues.

PROCEDURES

1 Introduce Part 4 of the video by asking students to call out some of the issues that emerged during the 1992 presidential campaign. They will likely mention issues such as the economy, family values, and trust. Remind them that other issues mentioned by the candidates were the balanced budget amendment, Supreme Court appointments, term limits, campaign spending reforms, and disputes about the role of the media. Next, hand out copies of **Student Handout 6—Community Survey** and give students five to ten minutes to respond. After they have finished, have them put the handouts aside. Then, tell them that they are about to hear what four former presidents have to say about such issues. Ask them to listen for these topics. **Show Part 4 of the video (37 minutes).**

PRESIDENTIAL NEWS CONFERENCE
10 A.m
WOW, ACCORDING TO THIS RECENT POLL I MUST BE THE ONLY ONE IN THE COUNTRY WHO DOESN'T LIKE THE PRESIDENT'S NEW PROGRAM.
MR. PRESIDENT, HOW DO YOU ANSWER THE GROWING NUMBER OF CRITICS WHO CONSIDER YOUR NEW PROGRAM A WASTE OF MONEY?
LATER

2 After students have seen Part 4 of the videotape, lead a discussion on each of the items on the handout and tally the results of the survey. Place the results on the board. Discuss what the presidents had to say about each item. Do they generally agree or disagree with the students? (To help you with the discussion, refer to **Teacher Notes** on pages 25 and 26.)

3 Finally, ask students to use the handout to survey schoolmates, members of their families, and people in the community to find out what others think. They should try to ask five to ten people their opinions about the items on the handout. After students have completed the community survey, tally the outcome and discuss the results. Do students in your class and people from outside class generally agree? What may account for any differences? How do the opinions of the people surveyed compare to the opinions of the former presidents?

Conclude by emphasizing that such issues are controversial and that it is difficult to gain a consensus either in Congress or in the general population. Such is the nature of democracy.

■ Have students research and list congressional "perks" that members of Congress enjoy in office and after they leave office. ("Perks" is short for perquisites—free or special services members receive as a benefit, such as reserved parking or free mailings.)

Are students surprised by the list? Do they think there are too few or too many perks? What privileges would they expect if they were to hold national office?

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS

■ Place students in groups of three or four and have each group collect information on one current controversial issue involving the president of the United States. Students should strive to use a variety of sources. You can help by bringing in videotapes, newspapers, magazines, and journals for them to consult—the more the better. Each group should discuss the following questions:

—Are the reports complimentary, critical, or neutral in their discussion of the president and the government?

—Do any reports use unidentified sources?

—Does the amount of information presented affect your view of the issue?

Have groups share their answers in a class discussion. Do the media deserve the criticism they get? Was the president's decision affected in any way by a media report?

Point out to your students that members of the media often try to be objective in their reports. Do they think objectivity is possible? Were the articles that they gathered objective or slanted? If slanted, in what ways?

■ Organize classroom debates around the following topics:

Resolved: A balanced budget amendment should be added to the Constitution.

Resolved: The Twenty-second Amendment, limiting a president to two terms, should be repealed.

Resolved: Terms of the members of the U.S. Congress should be limited.

Resolved: There should be restraints on what the media can report about the activities of the president and other government officials.

Depending on available time, you will have to decide how many debates to hold. If time does not allow all students to participate in a debate, you might want to assign them to be judges, timekeepers, or moderators.

TEACHER NOTES FOR STUDENT HANDOUT 6

1 Reagan favors a balanced budget amendment. The other three do not.

2 Carter believes that Congress and the president should arrive at a balanced budget agreement each year, without the benefit of a constitutional amendment. The other three do not address this issue in the video.

3 Nixon believes that if a Supreme Court nominee is qualified and has been approved by the American Bar Association, he or she should be confirmed regardless of his or her views on certain issues. He thinks that Congress should be concerned with qualifications and not views on issues. Reagan says that it was pure politics that kept Robert Bork from being confirmed by the Senate, even though he was well qualified.

4 The length of Supreme Court terms is not mentioned by any of the former presidents.

5 Ford thinks the Twenty-second Amendment should be repealed. Carter says that either the amendment should remain or a president should be elected for one six-year term. Reagan is opposed to the limitation on presidential terms.

6 Nixon recommends limiting House members to twelve years and Senate members to eighteen years. Ford does not favor term limits and thinks length of terms should remain the same. Reagan doesn't specifically address term limits but thinks House terms should be lengthened from two to four years. Carter does not favor term limits or changes in length of term.

7 Carter wants campaign funding reform—perhaps public financing—to reduce the influence of PACs. Nixon says that campaign spending is out of control. He thinks that free television time for candidates may be an answer. Ford says that PACs are too influential and should be eliminated.

8 Nixon thinks that the relationship between the president and media is often adversarial, but does not think the press should be controlled. Ford says that the media are aggressive because the various news organizations have to compete with each other. He thinks

that the press has an abnormal influence on the White House and Congress. Reagan thinks that press conferences are adversarial; he is critical of the Washington press corps. Carter says the White House press corps is combative but should not be restricted.

9 Reagan thinks that the president should not have to answer questions that may threaten national security. Others do not specifically address this issue.

10 Ford thinks that a president cannot isolate himself or herself from the people; the president has to travel and be a part of the people. The others have no specific comments about the risk of assassination.

LESSON 5

REFLECTIONS ON THE PRESIDENCY

National Archives, Nixon Project

OBJECTIVES

After completing this lesson, students will be able to:

1. gain a deeper understanding of some of the attitudes and opinions on the presidency held by four former presidents.
2. compare their own opinions on certain subjects with those of the former presidents.

PROCEDURES

1 **Show Part 5 of the video (5 minutes).** Then, ask students to react to the following quotes made by each of the four former presidents in this segment of the video:

> Richard Nixon, giving advice to young people preparing for a career in politics: *"First, I would probably limit television viewing to one hour a day. . . . I mean, television does not educate. Television sometimes informs, but . . . to develop your mind, you must read, you must think."*

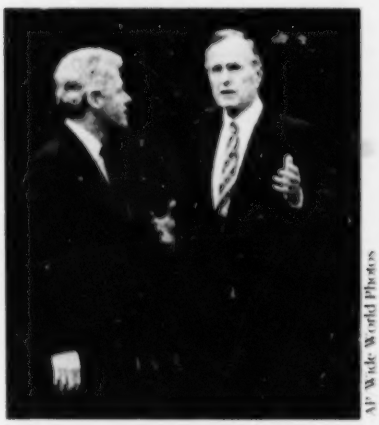
Ask students if they agree or disagree with Nixon's statement about the difference between watching television and reading. How much television do they watch each day? How much do they read? Do any students think they would ever go into politics?

> Gerald Ford, talking about what the president cannot do: *"A president cannot turn a switch and overnight reduce unemployment, cut back inflation, reduce interest rates, solve a recession. . . . The world in which we live doesn't operate that way."*

Do students agree with Ford's statement? What can a president do to reduce inflation, end a recession, and so forth? If a president cannot solve those problems, who can?

Jimmy Carter, talking about the Constitution: *". . . my guiding light . . . has not been the complexities of detailed laws, but the overarching effect of the U.S. Constitution itself because even a peanut farmer who hasn't been trained in a law school can comprehend the enormous benefits that came to the American people with a written document that guarantees our basic rights."*

President-elect Bill Clinton (left) visiting President George Bush at the White House after the November 1992 election.



AP Wide World Photos

Ask students if they think the average citizen can comprehend the complexities of being president. Would a lawyer have an advantage over a non-lawyer if he or she were president? Which of the most recent six presidents, including President Clinton, have been trained as lawyers? (Nixon, Ford, and Clinton have law degrees.)

Ronald Reagan, talking about the U.S. system of government: *"I would hope that we can get back to where we realize that this system of ours, established two centuries ago, is one in which the people in public office are really the servants of the people."*

Do students agree with Reagan? Why or why not? Have our elected officials generally thought of themselves as servants of the people?

2 Conclude by asking students their overall impressions of each of the four former presidents featured in this videotape. Ask them to comment on what they think the role of a former president should be. What do former presidents have to offer to the American people? What have these four men contributed since they have been out of office?

■ As a research project, have students write a one-page report reflecting on President Bush's four years in office. They should write about his accomplishments and failures and speculate on what they think the future holds for him. After several students have read their reports in front of the whole class, spend some time discussing students' memories and impressions of George Bush. How do they think history will remember him?

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS

■ Organize a role-playing activity in which one student plays the part of President Clinton and five other students play the five former presidents. The student playing Clinton should research questions that he or she may want to ask of the other presidents regarding their ideas about specific current foreign and domestic policies. Meanwhile, the five former president roleplayers should find out more about their characters' accomplishments and failures while in office and use that knowledge as the basis for their advice to President Clinton.

■ The spouse and children of the president are often in the news, but after presidents leave office, the public sees less and less of their families. It might be interesting for your students to find out about the families of the former presidents featured in the video and report to the class. You might want to direct them to the presidential libraries to gather information. They can write or call for information at the following:

Nixon Presidential Materials Staff
Office of Presidential Libraries
National Archives
Washington, DC 20408
703-756-6498

Gerald R. Ford Library
1000 Beal Avenue
Ann Arbor, MI 48109
313-668-2218
and
Gerald R. Ford Museum
303 Pearl Street, NW
Grand Rapids, MI 49504
616-456-2675

Jimmy Carter Library
One Copenhill Avenue
Atlanta, GA 30307
404-331-3942

Ronald Reagan Library
40 Presidential Drive
Simi Valley, CA 93065
805-522-8444

HANDOUTS

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CONSTITUTIONAL POWERS OF THE PRESIDENT

ARTICLE II, SECTION 2 OF THE CONSTITUTION

Section 2. The President shall be commander in chief of the army and navy of the United States, and of the militia of the several states, when called into the actual service of the United States; he may require the opinion, in writing, of the principal officer in each of the executive departments, upon any subject relating to the duties of their respective offices, and he shall have power to grant reprieves and pardons for offenses against the United States, except in cases of impeachment.

He shall have power, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, to make treaties, provided two-thirds of the Senators present concur; and he shall nominate, and by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, shall appoint ambassadors, other public ministers and consuls, judges of the Supreme Court, and all other officers of the United States, whose appointments are not herein otherwise provided for, and which shall be established by law; but Congress may by law vest the appointment of such inferior officers, as they think proper, in the President alone, in the courts of law, or in the heads of departments.

The President shall have power to fill up all vacancies that may happen during the recess of the Senate, by granting commissions which shall expire at the end of their next session.

ARTICLE II, SECTION 3 OF THE CONSTITUTION

Section 3. He [the President] shall from time to time give to the Congress information of the state of the Union, and recommend to their consideration such measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient; he may, on extraordinary occasions, convene both houses, or either of them, and in case of disagreement between them, with respect to the time of adjournment, he may adjourn them to such time as he shall think proper; he shall receive ambassadors and other public ministers; he shall take care that the laws be faithfully executed, and shall commission all the officers of the United States.

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STUDENT HANDOUT 2

INTRODUCING THE PRESIDENTS

Richard M. Nixon, the thirty-seventh president, born and educated in California, was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1947 and reelected in 1949. He was serving his first term in the U.S. Senate when selected by President Dwight Eisenhower in 1952 to be his vice presidential running mate. Nixon, a Republican, lost the 1960 presidential election to John Kennedy, but he came back to win the presidency in 1968 and in 1972. Nixon was the first president to visit Beijing and Moscow. On August 9, 1974, Richard Nixon became the only president to resign after the House Judiciary Committee voted to bring impeachment charges against him for his part in the cover-up of the Watergate break-in.

1 What does President Nixon have to say about consensus government?

2 What does he think about following polls?

3 Would Nixon change presidential campaigns?

Gerald R. Ford, the thirty-eighth president, born in Omaha, Nebraska, was first elected to represent his district in Michigan in the U.S. House of Representatives in 1948. In 1965, Ford, a Republican, became the minority leader of the House. Chosen by Richard Nixon to be the new vice president after the resignation of Vice President Spiro Agnew, Ford assumed that office in December 1973. Ford then ascended to the presidency in August 1974, after Nixon's resignation. Gerald Ford has been called "the accidental president" because he is the only person ever to achieve the office without being elected either president or vice president. He sent U.S. forces to Cambodia to rescue the Mayaguez—a U.S. cargo ship that had been seized by the Cambodians.

4 What was the highest-level job that President Ford ever aspired to? Did he want to be president?

5 What does Ford think he contributed to the nation after becoming president?

6 What does Gerald Ford think about polls?

Jimmy Carter, the thirty-ninth president, was born in Plains, Georgia. He served two terms in the Georgia state senate and was elected governor in 1970. Carter, a Democrat, entered the presidential race in 1976 as a virtual unknown, but secured his party's nomination after a massive grassroots effort and defeated President Ford in a close election. Jimmy Carter negotiated the Panama Canal treaty and the SALT II treaty, as well as the Camp David Middle East Peace Accords. His term was marred by an economic recession and the kidnapping of fifty-two American hostages in Iran. Carter was defeated in his bid for reelection by Ronald Reagan in 1980.

7 What role did being an outsider play in Jimmy Carter's election?

8 What promise—which he calls a "stupid promise"—did Carter make to the American people?

9 What does Carter have to say about the "imperial presidency"—the pomp and ceremony connected with the U.S. presidency?

Ronald Reagan, the fortieth president, was born in Tampico, Illinois, and became famous as a Hollywood actor before turning to politics. He was elected governor of California in 1966 and 1970 and barely lost the Republican nomination for president in 1976 to Gerald Ford. Reagan won a landslide victory in 1980 and was reelected in 1984. Espousing supply-side economics, he used tax cuts to spur the economy. Reagan sent U.S. troops to Grenada and held four summits with Soviet leaders while at the same time building up U.S. military strength.

10 What did President Reagan think the American people were hungering for when he came into office?

11 What was President Reagan's goal when he first came into the office of the presidency?

12 How does Reagan equate acting with being president of the United States?

WRITE YOUR ANSWERS HERE
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.
11.
12.

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STUDENT HANDOUT 3

DIVIDING THE POWERS

Using the Constitution as a guide, fill in the chart below. Identify constitutional powers and write them in the first column. Then decide if the power applies to Congress or the president (or both), and put a check in the appropriate column.

CONSTITUTIONAL POWER	PRESIDENTIAL POWER	CONGRESSIONAL POWER
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		

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STUDENT HANDOUT 4

PRESIDENTIAL SCORECARD

Complete the following chart by placing the initials of the five former presidents and President Clinton in the column you have selected. Be prepared to explain your answer.

THE PRESIDENT:	EXCEPTIONAL	SATISFACTORY	POOR	DON'T KNOW
1. works (worked) effectively with Congress				
2. makes (made) the nation as a whole feel secure and prosperous				
3. is (was) popular with the American public				
4. seems (seemed) to be well informed on issues				
5. responds (responded) well under pressure				
6. makes (made) wise selections of cabinet and White House staff				
7. is (was) respected by foreign leaders				
8. is (was) honest about weaknesses and mistakes				
9. seems (seemed) personable and approachable				
10. uses (used) media effectively				

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STUDENT HANDOUT 5

TOOLS OF FOREIGN POLICY

Nations possess an array of tools for carrying out foreign policy goals. Some tools are considered nonthreatening and help to build good relations among nations. Other tools are intended to be harsh and threatening, even if they do not lead to actual war. When formulating foreign policy, a nation's leaders must consider not only their own goals, but how other countries will be affected by what they do. The following tools have all been used by U.S. presidents and the government to carry out American foreign policy. After reading this information and seeing Part 3 of the video, answer the questions at the bottom of the handout.

DIPLOMACY. . . . . . Most of the business between nations is conducted through contact between diplomats—men and women representing their country's position to another country. Diplomacy takes many forms: nations grant one another formal diplomatic recognition; they hold cultural and scientific exchanges; they negotiate and draw up treaties; and their leaders attend summit meetings. In extreme circumstances, leaders may break off diplomatic relations.

MILITARY FORCE . . . . Most often the use of military force takes place when all other means fail. Military force does not always mean war, however; some uses of a nation's military are meant simply as warnings. Some nations use threats or a show of strength to advance their policies. Other types of military force include terrorism, covert actions such as sabotage, or a substantial arms buildup to generate fear among a nation's neighbors or enemies.

INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS . . . . . International organizations are made up of nations that want to participate. Such organizations provide a forum for nations to cooperate on problems that affect them all and act as players in the international arena. The United Nations is an example of an international organization, while the Organization of American States is a regional organization.

ALLIANCES . . . . . Alliances are multilateral agreements among nations to protect one another in case of attack by an adversary. By joining together, nations have more power and also make it clear on whose side they stand. A prominent example is the North American Treaty Organization (NATO).

FOREIGN AID . . . . . Many of the world's wealthy nations give economic and/or military aid to less developed countries to foster economic development, gain and protect allies, and promote internal stability.

TRADE RELATIONS . . Establishing trade relations with nations is often used as a way to show cooperation after a period of tension. Sometimes nations reduce or eliminate restrictions on one another's goods to promote stability or growth in their economies. Conversely, nations may restrict trade relations with others by imposing tariffs or quotas or breaking off trade altogether.

BOYCOTTS AND SANCTIONS . . . Boycotts and sanctions are hostile actions taken against nations. They are the most severe actions that can be taken short of military action. A boycott is a decision by one nation to abstain from buying certain goods to force another nation to change its policies. A sanction is taken by a nation to force another to comply with international law to change its policies. Denying loans or forcing a nation from an international organization are examples of sanctions.

PROPAGANDA . . . . . . Propaganda is one-sided or exaggerated information that a nation uses to gain support for its policies or to discredit the policies of an adversary. Propaganda takes many forms and has been used throughout history to influence public opinion.

ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

1. What tools of foreign policy did Richard Nixon use in Southeast Asia? Did he think he was successful? Why was Nixon criticized for what he did in Cambodia?

2. What tools did Gerald Ford use in the Mayaguez incident? Was he satisfied that what he did was justified? Why was he criticized for his actions?

3. What tools of foreign policy did Ronald Reagan use in Central America in general, and in Nicaragua specifically? Were his actions successful? How did he justify them?

4. What tools of foreign policy did Jimmy Carter use after the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan? What was the "Carter Doctrine"?

5. What was President Carter's response when he heard that the Ayatollah Khomeini was going to put the U.S. hostages on trial? Did his action work?

6. How do the four former presidents differ in their opinions about the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and covert operations?

7. How does Ronald Reagan justify his selling of arms to Iran? What does he say he might have done differently?

8. What foreign policy tools did Jimmy Carter decide to use in dealing with the Middle East? What risk did he take when he brought Anwar Sadat and Menachem Begin together at Camp David?

9. Why did President Reagan break off summit talks with Gorbachev at Reykjavik? Was he satisfied that what he did was justified and effective?

10. Why did President Reagan call the Soviet Union an "evil empire"? What did he call his answer to the Cold War?

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COMMUNITY SURVEY

When your teacher gives you this handout, read each item carefully and place a check in one of the two columns.

Later, when you take the handout outside of class, ask five to ten students, family members, and people in the community to respond to the same questions. Read each item to each person, and check his or her response in the appropriate column.

	AGREE	DISAGREE
1. An amendment requiring a balanced federal budget each year should be added to the Constitution.		
2. Congress and the president should be able to arrive at a balanced budget each year without adding such a requirement to the Constitution.		
3. The Senate should confirm a president's Supreme Court nominee if he or she is qualified rather than block the nomination based on the nominee's views about certain issues.		
4. Supreme Court justices should serve for a limited length of time, not for life.		
5. The Twenty-second Amendment, which limits the president to two terms, should be repealed and the president should be allowed to serve as many terms as the voters want.		
6. The number of terms that a member of Congress can serve should be limited.		
7. Campaign funding should be regulated to eliminate large donations made to candidates by political action committees (PACs).		
8. The media exert too much influence on the American political process and should be restrained.		
9. Members of the press should continue to ask challenging questions at presidential news conferences, and presidents should be required to answer.		
10. Because of repeated assassination attempts, presidents should be more isolated from the public than they are now.		

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1993. $15.95. Teacher's Guide, $9.95.

The Bill of Rights: A User's Guide

Show your students that the Bill of Rights is more than a dusty document from 1791. Real-life stories about the people behind constitutional test cases give your students an insider's view of the Bill of Rights in action today. *The Bill of Rights: A User's Guide* includes the history of the Bill of Rights from its roots to its ratification; examines the document amendment by amendment, exploring each right in sequence; and investigates the evolution of rights beyond the first ten amendments, focusing on the Fourteenth Amendment.

1991. $12.95. Teacher's Guide, $9.95.

"'. . . for which it stands': Flag Burning and the First Amendment"

This documentary video focuses on the Texas flag-burning case of 1989 and the emotional, political, and legal aspects of this First Amendment issue. Features interviews with Joey Johnson, the defendant in the flag-burning case, and Capt. Red McDaniel, a former Vietnam POW who helped create and hide a small American flag from his captors during his imprisonment. File footage of Jimi Hendrix, Madonna, and Roseanne Arnold and their controversial artistic expressions using the flag and the national anthem are included to fuel debate.

1992. VHS. 24 minutes. $39.95. Includes instructor's guide.

Current Issues: Critical Issues Confronting the Nation and the World

Take 20 timely domestic and foreign policy issues facing the United States, add concise background information, thought-provoking key questions, and a challenging pro/con debate on each issue. The result? An innovative learning tool that students enjoy using and teachers do not want to be without. Chapter topics include drugs, the economy, Europe, the Middle East, and much more. Updated annually.

1993. $12.95. Teacher's Guide, $14.95.

The American Economy: Government's Role, Citizen's Choice

This concise and informative publication explains how the government affects our economy and how the choices we make as citizens can influence the economic future of our nation and our world. A historical overview of the changing role of the U.S. government in the economy leads students to explore the human and social value factors that underlie economic decisions. Sections include the federal budget process and U.S. monetary, fiscal, and trade policies.

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1991. $9.95. Teacher's Guide, $9.95.

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1992. Includes Teacher's Guide. $21.95.

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